

New State Law Is a Big Step Against Secrecy

By HENRY C. MacARTHUR
Capitol News Service

SACRAMENTO — Signing of AB 1381 by Governor Ronald Reagan last week marks another step in the continuing battle to keep the public, or allow the public to be, informed as to what its government is doing.

The measure is authored by Assemblyman William T. Bagley (R-San Rafael) and is to the public's right to know the content of government documents as the Ralph M. Brown Act is to the public's

right to attend public meeting of local government.

Known as the California Public Records Act, it states as a fundamental policy of government: "Access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every citizen of the state."

Such an act on the statute books of California guarantees the right of a citizen to access to information which hitherto has been kept in confidential files, usually because governmental officials were unwilling to share the business of government with the people, or disliked having the public find out how that business was being conducted.

Certain records are exempted in the bill from disclosure, as would be expected when a new measure comes on the scene.

These exemptions include records involving public litigation, where the interest of the public would be damaged by disclosure; personal access to information which would invade privacy; trade

secrets which if public knowledge would deprive business of competitive advantage; data relating to oil and mineral findings, and several others which are discretionary.

Passage and signing of this far-reaching measure was not won easily, or without lengthy and hard-working discussion on the part of those who were interested in protecting the public's right to know.

Bagley has said several times that the measure emanated from an idea presented in an "Affairs of State"

column, published throughout California several years ago.

Subsequently, an advisory committee was appointed to work out the details of the new public records act.

This committee consisted of representatives from the state bar of California, the attorney general, the California Newspaper Publishers Association, the State Freedom of Information Committee; the American Newspaper Guild; the California Broadcasters Association; the California Association of School Administra-

tors, and the California School Boards Association.

Sigma Delta Chi, national journalistic organization, was prominently represented on the advisory committee, and in fact, its representatives did much of the spadework in getting the measure in shape for the legislature.

The measure represents an important step ahead in the battle for the right to know, amplifying the present laws relating to accessibility of public records, which were written in 1877 and pertained to the admissibility of evidence in judi-

cial proceedings, but did not define public policy.

It almost missed being signed this year, Bagley disclosed, because of the last-minute interference of some state government officials who wanted changes. These changes, he said, referred to relatively minor portions of the measure, and will be corrected at the next session of the legislature.

Through his untiring activity in securing both passage and signing of the measure, Bagley has performed an outstanding service to the public.

Your Right to Know Is the Key to All Your Liberties

-Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1968

Up to Legislators

Proposition No. 9, the Watson amendment to put a ceiling on property tax, is stirring considerable controversy. While criticism mounts, no one seems to have a solution to property tax relief.

The fears expressed would indicate that taxes collected from sources other than property would not have the same dollar value. The amendment does not claim the state must operate with less finances. It merely shifts responsibility to the legislators to come up with new and imaginative tax sources.

Latest organization to voice protest is the Engineering and Grading Contractors Association. It claims that, "Highly dangerous restrictions on public works bonding in the proposition will shift the burden of financing development and construction of vital public works such as sewers, flood control projects and special schools, directly to the shoulders of the California taxpayer."

It would seem that these programs now are paid by someone other than taxpayers.

It is a strange statement from an industry steeped in the philosophy of free enterprise.

The construction industry is for-

tunate to have a "built-in" funding program for road-building projects—the gasoline tax—and on federal and state levels.

Perhaps the next time Supervisor Kenneth Hahn suggests a raid on the state highway fund to finance other programs, he should be supported.

Naturally a cut in property tax will foster new tax demands. Certainly our legislators are capable of their responsibilities and will find a way. Unhappy as it might be.

Congestion Sure

Rapid transit and freeway planners are bumping heads again.

Last week a detailed account of a \$2.5 billion transit system, including a southwest corridor, was revealed aimed at reducing congestion on southland freeways.

This week, the division of highways released a progress report projecting construction of five new freeways in the southwest which will cost an estimated \$700,000,000—aimed at reducing congestion on existing freeways.

What could lie ahead are empty freeways and a congested rapid transit system.

His Second Chance



ROYCE BRIER

Landing Moon Explorer Still an Elusive Goal

It would be interesting to have the identity of the scientists who advised the late President Kennedy that we could put a man on the moon, and bring him back, by 1970.

Indeed, the goal seems farther from reality than it was when it was announced in 1961. The announcement in retrospect now appears to have been quite unaware of the technological problem it posed. Simple experience with the rudiments of the preparatory steps necessary even to attempt a lunar landing has taught most of the zealous Apollo advocates that the enterprise, as a technological problem, is of almost infinite complexity.

It is entirely probable the Soviet dream of lunar accomplishment has been equally lacking in realism, while at the same time it was presented to both Americans and Russians as a race for a breakthrough to the conquest of extra-terrestrial environment.

Morning Report:

With all this sympathy about what has happened to the Czechs, almost everybody has forgotten the poor Russians. The tanks rolled into Prague but the exhaust fumes will hang over Moscow for a long time.

Just for starters, the Kremlin jammed all foreign radio broadcasts for the first time in years. Those in control didn't want to take any chances that a bit of the truth might leak into the country. Those Soviet writers and professors, who have been complaining a bit about the government, will get the message. Outside of jail. And if not, after quick trials.

Sure, the Czechs lost their freedom. But so did the Russians and they had a lot less to lose.

Abe Mellinkoff

HERB CAEN SAYS:

'Cool It,' He Advises Rebels

My unsought advice to our young rebels today is to stop calling police officers "Pigs." In the current jargon, it's counter-productive. Esthetically, it's non-felicitous. Artistically, it's inaccurate. Morally, it places those who use the term in the same group with the morons whose common currency includes nigger, wop, kike, Chink, Jap and so on. Philosophically, it fails to distinguish between good and bad policemen. Hypocritically, those who call policemen "pigs" pretend to be dedicated to the dignity of man, so why should they rob a man of his dignity?

Final piece of unsought advice to the young rebels: cool it for a while. The reaction from the right is now more dangerous than any promise of immediate gain. Meanwhile, the UC budget is cut, a thing called a Rafferty is headed for the Senate (with the avowed help of H. L. Hunt) and you've made a very big man out of a very little man, George Wallace. If you're really ready to sacrifice all for full-scale revolution, that's one thing, but this other thing — trouble for trouble's sake — gives aid and comfort to your enemies and discomfort to the rest of us. The Establishment can break heads as well as hearts, and will and does. Repeat: cool it.

Via AP from Washington: "After two and a half years of public hearings and study, the Government has decided that unless it's 90 per cent peanuts, it isn't peanut butter." The foregoing flash is the result of the Food and Drug Administration's review of 7,800 pages of testimony . . . another statistic: During the seven years of "the American presence" in Vietnam, about 26,000 of our troops have been killed in combat. During that same period, 22,000 U.S. servicemen have been killed accidentally, more than half in traffic accidents. . . . Meanwhile, our psychological warfare forces continue to drop packets containing a toothbrush, a tiny tube of toothpaste, and a manual titled "How to Brush Your Teeth" on the fortunate peasants of Vietnam. A significant reduction in cavities and Vietnamese is expected by this time next year.

A Letter To My Son

By Tom Rische
High School Teacher and Youth Worker

Dear Bruce,

While you visited your grandmother, your mother and I were almost 6,000 miles away, seeing how Europeans think and act. For us, foreign travel is fun, and when you are older, you can come along.

Americans often are amazed to find that other countries don't think the U.S. is the center of the universe. In England, the Democratic National Convention usually was pushed off the front pages by the Czech invasion, a British princess' death, or results of the cricket playoffs (British equivalent of the World Series.)

Although the British were interested in the conventions, nobody we talked to was happy about either Richard Nixon or Hubert Humphrey (many Americans aren't either), but tended to prefer Humphrey. Sen. Eugene McCarthy seemed to have many fans, and we found a large rally for him at Speaker's Corner, a place where the British gather to discuss political issues. In fact, one group was even passing a petition, although I'm not sure what it was supposed to do.

Most people expressed great admiration for the late Kennedy brothers, and we were told that the English

mourned their deaths nearly as much as Americans. One woman lectured us on our "poor" educational system, "because it doesn't produce great statesmen, although I don't remember the British producing many Winston Churchills either."

Explaining America's political system isn't easy. Along with many Americans, Englishmen find our conventions, primaries, Electoral College, and long drawn-out campaigns very odd. (British campaigns last only a couple of months.)

We got thoroughly tangled up trying to explain what would happen if nobody gets a majority of the electoral vote, but I doubt that most Americans could explain it at all.

In Britain, violence is unusual (the "hobbies" don't carry guns), and many Englishmen regarded the demonstrations and police behavior at the convention as not too different from the tribal warfare that is going on in Nigeria. TV commentators dwelt on Chicago police brutality, and questioned how "civilized" Americans could be, with this kind of behavior.

We learned a lot about Americans talking to the British.

Your father understanding,
YOUR DAD

WILLIAM HOGAN

Kandy-Kolored Boswell Checks 'Acid Novelist'

In a full-dress profile of "acid novelist" Ken Kesey and his band of Merry Pranksters called "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," you must adjust to Tom Wolfe's eccentric literary style (full of "Ouija-whammy"). Then you must adjust to Kesey's equally eccentric life style ("out on the raggedy raggedy edge"), which many straights in the audience will object to right now. Be that as it may—this is a remarkable document, the most remarkable and urgently contemporary since Norman Mailer's dazzling personalized account of last year's peace march on the Pentagon, "Armies of the Night."

This is reportage on a hippie elite, which means the marijuana scene, the LSD scene, the Merry Pranksters scene, Kesey's La Honda bust, and North

Beach rooftop bust, his fugitive period in Mexico, pursued by the Federales, the FBI, and operatives of the San Mateo police department. The whole thing.

Some of it is electronic journalism, taken off tapes, and from the Prankster Archives, diaries, letters, photographs, clips from the 45-hour movie, much of it shot out of focus, the Pranksters made during the cross country trip in the summer of '64 in an International Harvester school bus that had once belonged to a man in Menlo Park (everybody "groked" over that).

But this is essentially a performance, and an electrifying one, by the former razzle-dazzle Herald Tribune reporter whose collected pieces were published in 1965 as "The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby." He has grown up a lot since then.

Wolfe, it seems to me, is the first certified literary Brahman to emerge from this Probation Generation, which he labels it and which Kesey symbolizes. Like Jackson Pollock's painting, you may not like it, but it is here, a strange, wonderful, controlled, inventive prose written in a frenzy of primary colors, something out of Hieronymus Bosch.

It would be ironic if Kesey, a self-styled "former writer," is remembered less as the author of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Sometimes a Great Notion" than as the central character of another writer's Boswellian efforts.

Kesey's Boswell says he tried to tell not only what Kesey and his Pranksters did, but to recreate the mental atmosphere, or subjective reality of it all. "I don't think their adventures can be understood without that," he emphasizes. So Wolfe grooves on many strange events, he reports and interprets — Kesey's alliance with the Hell's Angels; the Great Trips Festival at the San Francisco Longshoreman's Hall in January '66; the mutual hostility between Kesey and Timothy Leary; the "magical cement" of Kesey's charisma — some Count Cagliostro standing under the mighty strobe — and of course of Acid Tests, in which the Pranksters sloshed LSD into vats of Kool-Aid and distributed it among the citizenry, about as irresponsible a caper as any recorded in this frightening, Day-Glo odyssey down the great American superhighway.

Kesey may be the all-American Oregon boy who became the greatest dropout of them all. But the way Tom Wolfe tells it, Mysterious. You'd better believe

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